

T H E
L O U N G E R.

[N^o XXXII.]*Saturday, Sept. 10. 1785.*

I AM every day more and more disposed to congratulate myself on this visit to Colonel Caustic. Here I find him, with all his good qualities brought forward, with all his failings thrown into the back ground, which only serve (to carry the simile a little farther) to give force and relief to the picture. I am now assured of what before I was willing to believe, that Caustic's spleen is of that sort which is the produce of the warmest philanthropy. As the admirer of painting is most offended with the scrawls of a dauber, as the enthusiast in music is most hurt with the discords of an ill-played instrument; so the lover of mankind, as his own sense of virtue has painted them, when he comes abroad into life and sees what they really are, feels the disappointment in the severest manner; and he will often indulge in satire beyond the limits of discretion, while indifference or selfishness will be contented to take men as it finds them, and never allow itself to be disquieted with the foreness of disappointed benevolence, or the warmth of indignant virtue.

I have likewise made an acquisition of no inconsiderable value in the acquaintance of Colonel Caustic's sister. His affection for her is of that genuine sort which was to be expected from the view of his character I have given. The first night of my being here, when Miss Caustic was to retire after supper, her brother rose, drew back the large arm-chair in which she sat at table with one hand, pulled the bell-string with the other, opened the parlour-door while she was making her curtesy to me, and then saluted her as she went out, and bid her good night; and all this with a sort of tender ceremony which I felt then, and feel still, (for it is a thing of custom with them), as one of the pleasantest pieces of good breeding I had ever witnessed. "My sister is an
"excellent woman," said the Colonel, as he shut the door; "and
"I don't like her the worse for having something of the primeval
"about her. You don't know how much I owe her. When I was
"a careless young fellow, living what we called a fashionable life
"about town, thinking perhaps, like a puppy as I was, what sort

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of

“ of a coat I should wear, or what sort of stocking would best shew
 “ off my leg, or perhaps practising my salute before a glass, to
 “ enchant the ladies at a review, my sister Peggy, though several
 “ years younger, was here at home, nursing the declining age
 “ of one of the best of mothers, and managing every shilling not
 “ only of mine, but of theirs, to make up a sum for purchasing
 “ me a company. Since my mother’s death, and my being set-
 “ tled here, her attentions have been all transferred to me; my
 “ companion in health, my nurse in sickness, with all those little
 “ domestic services which, though they are cyphers in the general
 “ account, a man like me, whose home is so much to him, feels
 “ of infinite importance; and there is a manner of doing them, a
 “ quiet, unauthoritative, unbustling way of keeping things right,
 “ which is often more important than the things themselves.
 “ Then I am indebted to her for the tolerable terms I stand in
 “ with the world. When it grates harshly on me, (and I am old,
 “ and apt perhaps to be a little cross at times), she contrives some-
 “ how to smooth matters between us; and the apology I would
 “ not allow from itself, I can hear from her, knowing as I do her
 “ worth, and the affection she bears me.—I were a brute to
 “ love her less than I do.

“ There is something,” continued the Colonel, after a little
 pause, “ in the circumstance of sex, that mixes a degree of tender-
 “ ness with our duty to a female, something that claims our pro-
 “ tection and our service in a style so different from what the
 “ other demands from us;—the very same offices are performed
 “ so differently, ’tis like grasping a crab-tree, and touching a
 “ violet. Whenever I see a man treat a woman not as a woman
 “ should be treated, be it a chambermaid or a kitchen-wench, (not
 “ to say a wife or a sister, though I have seen such examples), let
 “ him be of what fashion or rank he may, or as polite at other
 “ times as he will, I am sure his politeness is not of the right
 “ breed. He may have been taught by a dancing-master, at court,
 “ or by travel; but still his courtesy is not his own; ’tis borrowed
 “ only, and not to be relied on.”

Miss Caustic, with all those domestic and household accom-
 plishments which her brother commends, often shows that she has
 been skilled in more refined ones, though she has now laid them
 aside, like the dresses of her youth, as unsuitable to her age and
 situation. She can still talk of Music, of Poetry, of Plays, and of
 Novels;

Novels; and in conversation with younger people, listens to their discourse on those topics with an interest and a feeling that is particularly pleasing to them. Her own studies, however, are of a more serious cast. Besides those books of devotion which employ her private hours, she reads-history for amusement, gardening and medicine by way of business: for she is the physician of the parish, and is thought by the country-folks to be wonderfully skilful. Her brother often jokes her on the number and the wants of her patients. "I don't know, Sister," said he t'other morning, "what fees you get; but your patients cost me a great deal of money. -I have unfortunately but one Recipe, and it is a specific for almost all their diseases."—"I only ask now and then," said she, "the key of your cellar for them, Brother; the key of your purse they will find for themselves. Yet why should not we be apothecaries that way? Poverty is a disease too; and if a little of my cordials, or your money, can cheer the hearts of some who have no other malady"—"It is well bestowed, Sister Peggy; and so we'll continue to practise, though we should now and then be cheated."

"'Tis one of the advantages of the country," said I, "that you get within reach of a certain rank of men, often most virtuous and useful, whom in a town we have no opportunity of knowing at all."—"Why, yes," said Caustic; "but the misfortune is, that those who could do the most for them, seldom see them as they ought. I have heard that a body carries a certain atmosphere of its own along with it, which a change of air does not immediately remove. So there is a certain town-atmosphere which a great man brings with him into the country. He has two or three laced lacquies, and two or three attendants without wages, through whom he sees, and hears, and does every thing; and Poverty, Industry, and Nature, get no nearer than the great gate of his court-yard."—"Tis but too true," said his sister. "I have several pensioners who came with heavy hearts from Lord Grubwell's door, though they were once, they say, tenants or workmen of his own, or, as some of them pretend, relations of his grandfather."—"That's the very reason," continued the Colonel; "why will they put the man in mind of his father and grandfather? The fellows deserve a horse-pond for their impertinence."—"Nay, but in troth," replied Miss Caustic, "my Lord knows nothing of the matter. He carries so much of the town-atmosphere, as you call it, about him. He
" don't

“ don’t rise till eleven, nor breakfast till twelve. Then he has
 “ his steward with him for one hour, his architect for another,
 “ his layer out of ground for a third. After this he sometimes
 “ gallops out for a little exercise, or plays at billiards within
 “ doors : Dines at a table of twenty covers; sits very late at his
 “ bottle; plays cards, except when my Lady chuses dancing, till
 “ midnight; and they seldom part till sun-rise.”— “ And so
 “ ends,” said the Colonel, “ your *Idyllium* on my Lord Grubwell’s
 “ rural occupations.”

We heard the tread of a horse in the court, and presently John entered with a card in his hand; which his master no sooner threw his eyes on, than he said, “ But you need not describe, “ Sister, our friend may see, if he inclines it. That card (I could “ tell the chaplain’s fold at a mile’s distance) is my Lord’s annual “ invitation to dinner. Is it not, John?”— “ It is my Lord “ Grubwell’s servant, Sir,” said John. His master read the card : “ And as he understands the Colonel has at present a friend from “ town with him, he requests that he would present that gentle- “ man his Lordship’s compliments, and intreat the honour of his “ company also.”— “ Here is another card, Sir, for Miss Caustic.” — “ Yes, yes, she always gets a counterpart.”— “ But I shan’t “ go,” said his sister; “ her Ladyship has young Ladies enow “ to make fools of; an old woman is not worth the trouble.”— “ Why then you must say so,” answered her brother; for the “ chaplain has a note here at the bottom, that an answer is re- “ quested. I suppose your great folks now-a-days contract with “ their *maitre d’hotel* by the head; and so they save half a crown, “ when one don’t set down one’s name for a cover.”— “ But, “ spite of the half crown, you must go,” said the Colonel to me; “ you will find food for moralising; and I shall like my own “ dinner the better. So return an answer accordingly, Sister; “ and do you hear, John, give my Lord’s servant a slice of cold “ beef and a tankard of beer in the mean time. It is possible he “ is fed upon contract too; and for such patients, I believe, Sister “ Peggy, Dr Buchan’s *Domestic Medicine* recommends cold beef “ and a tankard.”

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